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VENETIAN ART GLASS.

BY MRS. S. A. BROCK PUTNAM.



No city in the world is shopping more fascinating than in Venice. We may speak of the well ordered and daintily-furnished shops of the Avenue de l'Opera, and the Rue de la Paix, in Paris; of the many notable shops of Regent and Oxford streets, in London; of the charming shops of the elegant *gallerias* of Genoa, Naples and Milan; of the world-renowned shops of the Piazza di Spagna, and the marvelous shop of revived Etruscan art in jewelry, of Castellani, in his palace in Rome; of the celebrated shops of specialties in Vienna; of the quaint little shops of the bazaars in Alexandria, Cairo, Jerusalem, Smyrna, Constantinople and other Oriental cities; or, crossing the Atlantic ocean and finding comparative example at home, we may point with pride to the luxuriously devised and sumptuously furnished emporiums of our own country,

for which are laid under contribution the productions and manufactures of every country and city known to the world's commerce—there is in the shops of Venice, however simple or unpretentious, an attractiveness of wares and appointments scarcely equaled by what is to be found in the shops of any other city of present importance.

It matters not how closely may be drawn the purse strings, or how potent the whisperings of prudence, the woman aesthetically exercised rarely escapes from the shops of the Piazza San Marco without being the gratified possessor of a *ricordo di Venezia*—for their wares are irresistible.

Venice is full of curios, not only to be found in the collections of *virtuosi*, but in the manufactures in which are enlisted present energy, ingenuity and enterprise. She is not wholly given up to the *dolce far niente* existence, that some might suppose, from her location and surroundings; nor is she content to rest in the glamour of the romance which hangs about her in a many-colored drapery, or to repose upon her past glories in commerce or art; but is abreast of the age in many of the activities and most of the material comforts of life. In her manufactures the art-idea which once found expression from the pencils of Titian, Paul Veronese, Tintoretto and Palma Vecchio, in mural decoration, now finds form in the scarcely less ambitious work of artisans.

The glass interests of Venice are very ancient, and their history is not uninvested with the romance which has always so peculiarly invested the city. The process of making having been brought from the city of Tyre in Phœnicia, the principal site of the glass manufactures of Europe, and of the world, during the dark and Middle Ages, was Venice, whither it was trans-

planted on the foundation of the city in the seventh century. Antedating and excelling accomplishments in the fictile art both of the Etruscans and the Bohemians during the period of the Renaissance, Venice had the monopoly of the glass manufacture in Europe, an advantage easily sustained because of the superiority of her productions. While Brunelleschi was evolving the marvelous dome of the Cathedral of the Madonna della Fiore, in Florence, and Michael Angelo was chiseling himself immortal in marble, and making a deathless name in painting and sculpture, and her own artists rendering glorious her churches and palaces, the glass workers of Venice, out on the little Island of Murano, were no less surely gathering to themselves imperishable fame in creations which have found place beside the metal work of Benvenuto Cellini, in all the museums and in many of the grandest palaces in Europe. The pity is, that the names of many of those worthy workmen are preserved only in their remote descendants; that we do not find them engraved upon the pieces now shown as evidences, no less of the art-principle which prompted the design than of the mechanical skill which gave it expression. But Venice was destined not uninterruptedly to profit by the monopoly that she had so deservedly acquired in the manufacture of glass. Colbert, the enterprising Prime Minister of Louis XIV., together with lace-making and tapestry-weaving, during the latter half of the seventeenth century, introduced the manufacture of glass into France. There is no evidence, however, that the glass manufactures of France ever attained the degree of perfection of those of Venice, or, at any rate they were pursued upon different lines, as in the case of the Bohemian, Hungarian, Russian and other glass manufactures of the present day—the blown glass of Murano, showing in the pieces made, a uniqueness of conception and a delicacy of execution unequalled by all attempts in the fictile art, whether ancient or modern.

Yet dark days were to come to Venice, in its glass, as in other industries which engaged the commercial energies of the people. With the changes which crept into the government and social life, the decline of the power of the Doges, and the loss of the patronage

which comes of official and social influence and wealth, the interest in the glass manufactures of Murano flagged—the workmen, doubtless, becoming disheartened, and for lack of impetus, perhaps, allowing the art-instinct, which found expression in their beautiful vases, tazzas, ewers and other articles in blown glass, to become dormant, although not, indeed, to die out. It is said that even before the end of the seventeenth century, "the artistic perception of form and color" which had formerly characterized the Murano workmen had, to a great extent, left their minds; and it was distressing to compare the heavy, ill-shaped, highly colored pieces then made, with the exquisitely colored and gracefully designed creations of *vertu* of the past. It is needless to add that the invasion of Napoleon I., with his greed for collecting treasures, in the theory that, "To the victor belongs the spoils," did little to better the condition of Venice, as involving her industries; while but for the impulse which slumbered, but was not dead, the Austrian power might have extinguished forever all effort in the direction of art. As



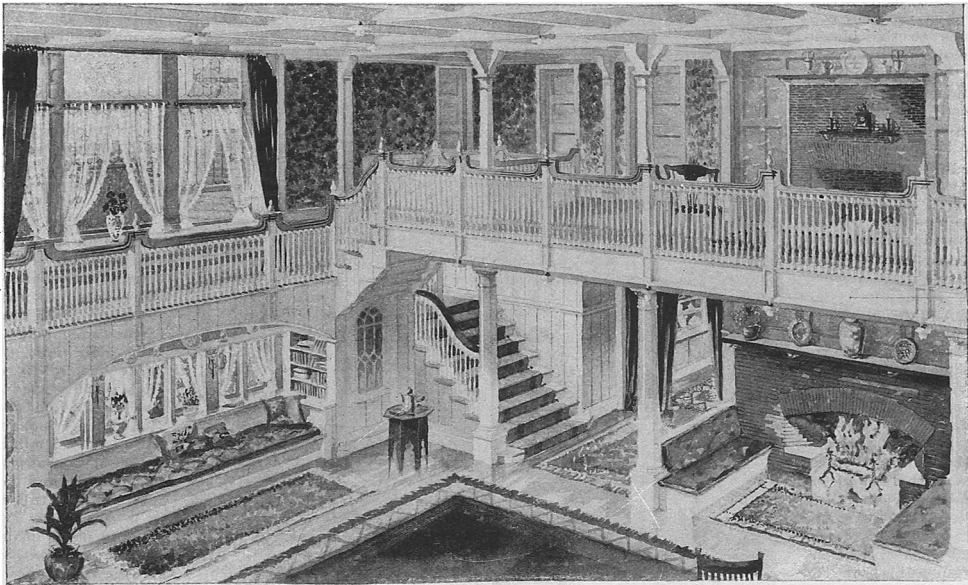
SITTING-ROOM FOR A. G. LOOMIS, ESQ., HARTFORD, CONN. HAPGOOD & HAPGOOD, ARCHITECTS, HARTFORD, CONN.
(By permission of the Architectural League.)

it was, though in a sense paralyzed, it was not wholly destroyed, as facts have shown, an incentive being needed to prove that it was only slumbering, to be aroused when the time came for it to exert itself. The traditions of the old glass blowers of Murano had been proudly preserved, and awaited only encouraging opportunity to again kindle the fires in the Murano furnaces, for transmuting the sand, washed down to the shores of the island from the Alps, into things of beauty.

At length the opportunity came. Strange to relate, however, the revival of the blown-glass manufactures of Murano is not due to any one of the descendants of the old workers, but to Dr. Salviati, a lawyer of eminence, who, we are told, "while exercising his professional duties at the Venetian forum, spent his leisure hours in admiring and studying the sublime works left by his ancient compatriots." It grieved him immeasurably to contemplate the lethargy that enshrouded the glass industries of Venice. At first he was most actively exercised in regard to the decadence of the mosaic art, and laying aside his briefs and relegating jurisprudence to fellows more directly in sympathy with the legal profession, he conceived the idea of resuscitating Venetian mosaics; and by inevitable consequence,

position," as says another, "to exclaim: 'Now again is Venice famous for her blown-glass and mosaics!'"

From the time of successful re-establishment until the present, the furnaces of Murano have been in blast, and the production of blown-glass has been uninterrupted save, it may here be remarked, during the vacation period of a month or six weeks in the latter part of the summer, when the weather becomes too oppressively warm to continue the work. The art-instinct that, in ancient times, lifted the blown-glass of Murano from the level of mere manufacture, is visible in the creations of the present. It may be ever so simple an article, a tiny jug, for instance, a wine glass, or a little funnel-shaped vase opening like a wild morning-glory and mounted upon the tails of a couple of dolphins, it is inexpressibly delicate in effect, with every line of grace imprisoned in its shape, and of matchless coloring, whatever may be the hue, tone or tint. The blown glass of Venice really defies criticism. Infinite variety, indeed, appears in conception, design, tint and finish, and one passes from piece to piece at a loss to decide with which to be the most delighted. The chandelier in *arventurina*, like translucent gold, or like an immense creation of frost work set with deli-



HALL IN HOUSE FOR MRS. SIMON M. ANDREWS, GREENWICH, CONN. WATER COLOR BY WM. S. LOWNDEN. LITTLE & O'CONNOR, ARCHITECTS, NEW YORK CITY. (By permission of the Architectural League.)

he was led also to meditate the resuscitation of Venetian art-glass.

This was in the year 1859. Associating with him Lorenzo Radi, an artisan who, for many years, had occupied himself in the study of vitrefaction, Dr. Salviati devoted not only his time to the study of the manufacture of the gold, silver and colored enamels used in the old Venetian mosaics, but his wealth to their practical development and perfection.

The joint experiments of Dr. Salviati and Lorenzo Radi were so successful that, upon careful examination, a committee of painters, sculptors and architects, of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, were compelled to declare the gold, silver and colored enamels produced by them "superior to the enamels of ancient times." The discovery of the method of producing these enamels proved the beginning of the revelations of certain secrets involved in the manufacture of the old blown-glass, the starting-point in the revival of the glass-industry of Murano, and the restoration of a lost art to Venice.

The success which has attended Dr. Salviati's efforts has more than compensated him for the years of study, labor and money devoted to the development of his beloved art. It was indeed a happy day for him, "when he was in the proud

cately tinted roses, hung about with crystal chains, is ravishing; while the scallop-shell card-receiver, with a winged horse for a handle, is charming. The poetry in a mirror rarely attains full significance, unless it be one of those incomparable beveled plates of Venice, with floriated crystal frame of Venetian workmanship. Wax candles seem never to burn with a light quite so softly delightful as in Venetian glass candelabra; while the enjoyment of feasting is inevitably enhanced by the service of Venetian glass for the fruits and the wines. My lady's boudoir is scarcely complete in its ornamentation without the delicate Venetian glass vase to support the bunch of roses or orchids, which may daily come from some admirer or generous friend; nor is any cabinet thoroughly furnished which does not show one or more specimens of this exquisite manufacture of the humble little island and town so jealously watched over by "The Queen of the Adriatic."

At some time it may be a pleasant duty to give a detailed account of the process of this interesting manufacture; but just now it is to the purpose to refer to it as the outcome of an artistic principle, of which it is so incontestably the expression, and which has been, from its inception centuries ago, so vigorously active in the minds of its designers. Copies from the

antique, or from pieces preserved in museums, or found among the treasures of old palaces, are abundant in the Venetian blown glass of recent make, and classic ideas rule the production. But the *maestro* of the Renaissance, which the blown glass of Murano now enjoys, has scarcely need to refer for suggestions to what was done by the *maestri* of that more comprehensive Renaissance, which embraced painting, sculpture and architecture.

"The glass blower of Murano," as says Dr. Giulio Salviati, in a paper read by him before the Applied Art-Section of the Society of Arts in London, is no mere artisan; he is in every respect a true artist, endowed with the perception of beauty, who invents and creates daily new forms and colors;" and he might have added, as in painting and poetry, "new delights to the soul and sense."

Notwithstanding competition the glass interests of Venice are still chiefly in the hands of the Salviati family. Nor are they confined alone to the blown-glass herein referred, but embrace varieties in art glass which deserve separate notice and comment. The present proprietor, Dr. A. Salviati, is a son of the original proprietor of the revived works at Murano, and not less an enthusiast in his business than was his father, nor less promotive in the creation of the beautiful.

DECORATIVE NOTES.

THE Shah of Persia owns the most valuable arm-chair in the world. He has an arm-chair of solid gold inlaid with precious stones. About a year ago some of the stones were stolen from one of the legs of the chair and the Shah, full of indignation, ordered the arrest of a number of servants and the keeper of the palace responsible for the furniture, with the intimation that if the thief was not discovered the keeper would be beheaded.

The culprit being eventually found he was forthwith beheaded and his head carried on a pole by the imperial bodyguard through the streets of Teheran.

A valuable arm-chair is in the possession of the Earl of Radnor. It originally cost £40,000 and was presented by the city of Augsburg to the Emperor Rudolph II., of Germany, about the year 1756. It is of steel and took the artist about thirty years to make. The chair became the property of Count Tessin, ambassador from the court of Sweden to the English court. Gustavus Brander afterward bought it, as an antique, for 1,800 guineas and sold it to the Earl of Radnor for 600 guineas. Of chairs once owned by British celebrities some were lately sold by auction: Shakespeare's for £126; Gay's, £30; Theodore Hook's, £9; Bulwer Lytton's, £18; Anne Boleyn's, £10 10s.; Charles II.'s, £10; Mrs. Siddons's, £7; Pope's, £5 10s.; Mrs. Brown-

ing's, £5; Thackeray's, £3 10s.; Walter Savage Landor's, £3 10s.; Lord Byron's, £3 10s., and Sir Walter Raleigh's, £2.

A PRETTY French work-table is of white enameled wood, with twisted uprights and triple shelves. These are treated to little mat-like coverings of Trignon blue plush, edged with antique gold galloon, and invite the repose of dainty Dresden porcelains, little trays for knick-knacks, writing tablet, manicure requisites, etc. Brocaded satin work-bags, trimmed with lace, hang from its sides, and a candelabra, shaded with a lace scarf on top to provide light when its owner desires to read or sew at night.



CARTOON, "INDUSTRY AND ABUNDANCE," FOR WINDOW IN CITY HALL, CINCINNATI, OHIO. MADE BY POTTER, STYRUS & CO., NEW YORK. DESIGNED BY EDWARD HAMILTON BELL, NEW YORK. (By permission of the Architectural League.)

THE bath tub from which age and constant use have worn away the brightness is the despair of the model housewife, who wishes to have everything about her home show traces of care on the part of herself and her domestics. How distressed she is when, after several ineffectual attempts to burnish up the metal lining, the dull, worn look remains, and the unwelcome truth burst upon her that its "polishing days" are over, and there must in the future hover about the tub the air of dinginess and neglect!

To avoid this sort of trouble an ingenious idea is on the wing, which will, as time advances, gain in favor. Who does not admire the porcelain tubs in which fortune's pampered proteges take their daily dip? To those but lightly endowed with worldly goods the possession of one of these luxurious fancies looks to be an utter impossibility. But there is a means by which the mother and her brood may secure a tub, which, if it is not quite up to the mark in point of quality, is certainly as daintily attractive in appearance as that of porcelain.

This is the enameled bath tub. When the zinc or tin lining grows shabby give it a coat of white paint. After this has dried apply several thicknesses of white enamel, waiting for each application to dry before adding the next. In this way a thick enamel coating is laid upon the metal, giving it the appearance, when completed, of porcelain. The enamel-lined tub is not only very much daintier in appearance, but can be kept

in order more easily than zinc or tin, a damp cloth wiped across the surface being all that is needed to retain the purity of coloring.

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